RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 25th August, 1993/the 3rd Bhadra, 1915 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock. The **Deputy Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Introduction of new sleeper class by Railways

*401. SHRI ASHIS SEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that although a new sleeper class has been introduced by the Railways with 25 per cent increase over normal 2nd class fare, bonafide passengers in this class (other than RAC ticket holders) are not guaranteed a full berth sleeping accommodation during night journey, due to entry of persons unauthorised to travel by this class, and consequential harassment;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is no check at all to restrict admission of unauthorised passengers in these coaches and the concerned TTEs are elusive;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the old coaches which are dirty and unusable are put into service; and

(d) whether Government propose to take immediate steps to rectify the position?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) and (b) Passengers having reserved/RAC berths only are authorised to travel in Sleeper Class. Some complaints have been received regarding disturbance to Sleeper Class passenger on account of passengers not having Sleeper Class tickets entering these coaches. The concerned staff have instructions to prevent entry of unauthorised passengers in Sleeper Class and checks are also conducted through special squads so that there is no harassment to the bonafide passengers.

(c) No Madam.

(d) Does not arise.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: Madam, before putting my supplementary, I would like to state that it is not correct to say that these passengers are getting the benefits. An additional fare of 25 per cent is there. I know of cases where people could not get sleeping accommodation also, particularly those coming from Calcutta to Delhi, as the coaches were crowded with many unauthorised passengers. They could not get sleeping accommodation because of this. It is also not correct to say, as the Minister has just now said, that the toilets and bogies are quite clean. It is not so. The same old bogies are there and there is no arrangement for cleaning the bogies at the proper time. You are charging an additional fare to the extent of 25 per cent and what is the benefit you are giving to the passengers?

SHRI K. C. LENKA: Madam, the main objective of introducing Sleeper Classes is to ensure comfortable journey to the long-distance passengers and to give them the opportunity of enjoying full reserved accommodation in those trains. It was done because, before the introduction of these Sleeper Classes, these long-distance passengers were harassed like anything by unathorised passengers who entered into these coaches. That was why we introduced these Sleeper Classes from 1-4-93. I agree that there might be some disturbance still continuing because the commuters who are travelling by train since long are also creating disturbance to the passengers by entering the Sleeper Class coaches. Our staff in charge of manning these coaches are trying very much to check them. According to the figures which we have received, the number of unauthorised passengers entering the reserved coaches has come down. So far as cleanliness of the trains is concerned, recently we have introduced the Travelling Safaiwalas in the trains so that they will clean the trains everyday and they will clean the toilets also. Apart from that, we have introduced intensive cleanliness programmes in the trains so that cleanliness is maintained in the trains and there will be no awkwardness or discomfort to the passengers.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: Madam, the point is that this arrangement has been made more in the files of the Ministry than in actual operation. Another point is that when unauthorised persons enter into these coaches, there is no checker available. Throughout the night, there is no checker available to find out whether comfort is given to these passengers or not. It is a material point. It is more in theory. I want it to be in practice. Have you introduced sufficient checking personnel to see to it that those people who pay this 25 per cent additional fare will be getting a reasonable comfort?

SHRI K. C. LENKA: Madam, continuous efforts are being made to check these un-

authorised passengers. For the information of the House, after 1-4-1993, after the introduction of the Sleeper Class, 82 checks have been conducted in the Northern Railway and 4,227 passengers have been detected travelling unauthorised in the Sleeper Class. So far as the Eastern Railway is concerned, 721 checks have been conducted and 3,946 passengers have been detected travelling unauthorised in the Sleeper Class.

Secondly, Madam, for the benefit of the passengers, we have introduced a number of extra trains, shuttle trains. This gives advantage to the commuters in the suburban areas. So far as the Eastern Railway is concerned, we have introduced so many extra coaches for these commuters in the Howrah-Bombay Mail and the Howrah-Gorakhpur Express. Besides this, we have introduced 13 trains newly after 1-4-1993 for the benefit of the commuters. Those who were previously going in the Sleeper classes can now travel in these classes.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : उपसभापति महोदया, इन्होंने प्रश्न किया था कि इन्ट्यूडर्स इसमें घुस जाते हैं और मंत्री महोदय ने जवाब दिया सफाई कर्मचारियों के बारे में । पता नहीं सफाई मजदूर घुसपैठियों की सफाई करेंगे ।

SHRI K. C. LENKA: No, no. I agreed that some unauthorised persons are coming, and our staff there is trying to check them. And that is why the raids have been conducted. For cleanliness, I have said that Safaiwalas are there.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Safaikarmacharis are there to do the 'safai' not of the passengers, but of the toilets.

SHRI K. C. LENKA: Probably, he could not listen to me.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : महोदया, हो सकता है मैं गलत समझा हूं । मेरा प्रश्न दूसरा है । बिहार से डेढ़ लाख, दो लाख आदमी फसल के सीजन में पंजाब और हरियाणा वगैरह जाते हैं । मैंने मंत्री महोदय को पत्र भी लिखा था जाफर शरीफ जी को । उन्होंने जवाब दिया है अपने लेटर में कि वह 5-6 बोगी एड कर रहे हैं । दो-तीन ट्रेनों का नाम देकर बताया है । इसमें एक चौथाई आदमी भी नहीं जा पाये हैं । इसलिए मेरा मंत्री महोदय से अनुरोध है कि क्या आप ऐसा करेंगे कि सीजन में कुछ स्पेशल ट्रेन चला दें जिससे मजदूर जाकर वहां काम कर सकें और फिर जब फसल समाप्त हो जाए, सीजन खत्म हो जाए उस वक्त लौटने के लिए एक स्पेशल ट्रेन चला दें ? क्या आप ऐसा करेंगे यह मेरा प्रश्न है ?

SHRI K. C. LENKA: Madam, I will look into this matter.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Madam Deputy Chairman, the inconvenience and hardship being undergone by the Ticket Examiners, particularly whose job is to check and examine and supervise the sleeper coaches, can be seen from the fact that they are not given a berth or a seat, not even in the second class sleeper coaches which was the practice earlier. That practice has been given up particularly in the Southern Railway. I made a representation which was also signed by many M.Ps. to the hon. Minister, Mr. Jaffer Sharief, to consider our suggestion with regard to these ticket examiners who have to stand throughout the night and who are not even getting a seat in the second class sleeper coaches. Previously. . . . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, are you going to provide a seat to the ticket examiners? Mr. Gopalsamy, you have made your point.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: There is a great inconvenience felt by the ticket examiners. . . . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, are you going to consider?

SHRI K. C. LENKA: This point will be examined.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He says it was there earlier.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: I gave a representation to Mr. Jaffer Sharief. Let him say.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): Madam, we all understand the problems of the ticket examiners who have to travel in the trains. We understand their problem of not finding accommodation. We are looking into this matter to see how we can arrange some accommodation for them in the train. Actually there is some modification in the newly built coaches and we are trying to see how we can provide some accommodation to them.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Within one minute you can pass orders.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: It is not a question of passing orders. We have to see. . . . . .

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Earlier they used to be provided. . . . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He says he is trying.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: There is not even a single seat for them.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: It is there; I have myself travelled and I have seen it.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: We have witnessed the hardship being faced by the ticket examiners. They are also human beings. Throughout the night they have to stand in the same coach.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister answer.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: In some coaches where it is not there, we will try to arrange it.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Madam, I seek your protection.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I gave you enough protection.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: We made a representation pointing out what is happening in the Southern Railway, in Tamil Nadu. The practice which was there earlier has been abolished during the past 3-4 years. Throughout the night, they have to stand. Next to postal employees the Railway employees are the worst affected employees in the Government. Some human consideration should be there for them. The Minister could pass orders within no time. We have given a representation also. This is the treatment you are giving to the ticket examiners.

श्री वीरेन्द्र कटारिया: मेडम डिप्टी चेयरमेन, हर्टी और अन-यूजेबिल स्लीपर क्लासेज के बारे में सवाल उठाया गया है और यह कहा गया है कि इसमें अन-ऑथोराइज्ड लोग जाते हैं । मैं मिनिस्टर साहब से पूछना चाहता हूं कि जितने अन-ऑथोराइज्ड लोग जाते हैं, उनके बारे में ट्रेवलिंग पब्लिक का यह एक्सपीरियंस है कि they go with the connivance of TTEs. आप जो कहते हैं कि टी० टी० ई० उनको रोकने की कोशिश करते हैं, आम लोग जो सफर करते हैं, वह यह कहते हैं कि टी० टी० ई० की कंनाइवेंस से अन-ऑथोराइज्ड पर्सन्स जाते हैं । तो आप इसको रोकने के लिए क्या कर रहे हैं ? इसके अलावा अनयूजेबिल और हर्टी कम्पार्टमेंट सिर्फ स्लीपर क्लासेज के नहीं हैं, आपने एक ट्रेन चलाई है—दिल्ली से गंगानगर के लिए, जिसका नाम आपने बड़ा खूबसूरत रखा है—उद्यान आभा एक्सप्रेस । उसके जो डिब्बे हैं, वह सारे The whole rake is junk और इस बात को मैं एक साल से आपकी खिदमत में खुद मिलकर के, सवालात के जरिए से और हर तरीके से आपके नोटिस में लाया हूं । एक साल गुजारने के बाद भी आज जो केटिल कोचेज हैं, वह मेरा ख्याल है कि उद्यान आभा एक्सप्रेस से बेटर हैं और लोग उन डिब्बों को जो कि जानवरों के लिए हैं, को देखकर रश्क करते हैं कि हमारे लिए भी ऐसे ही डिब्बे हों तो बेहतर है । मैं जनाब मिनिस्टर साहब से यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि इस सेक्शन पर ह्यूमन कौंहरम के लिए कब डिब्बे लगाए जाएंगे ? वर्तमान में जो डिब्बे हैं, उनमें न लाईट है, डिब्बे टूटे हुए हैं, छतें टूटी हुई हैं, कोई कंडक्टर नहीं, कोई सफाई वाला नहीं है । फर्स्ट क्लास के डिब्बों के जो दरवाजे हैं वह भी टूटे हुए हैं और कोई लाईट नहीं है और इन हालातों में जो महिला पैसेंजर्स हैं, उनके साथ भी छेड़खानी की जाती है और उनको तंग किया जाता है ।

SHRI K. C. LENKA: Madam, I thank the hon. Member for drawing the attention of the House to the dilapidated condition of the Abha Express.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has made representations before also.

SHRI K. C. LENKA: The hon. Member has drawn the attention of the House to the condition of the Abha Express. I will make an enquiry in this regard as to what is the position. Then, I will take proper action if this train, the Abha Express, is not being maintained properly. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Madam, this situation is very dangerous because if there is no light, the security of the passengers will be at stake. It is not only a question of cleanliness, but there is also this danger.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. I will request hon. Members. This is Question Hour. In Question Hour, if you go properly, you will get the answer also properly and we will be able to cover more questions. I do not think the hon. Minister has any answer today because he is going to find out what is happening. I will request the hon. Minister to find out and come back with all the facts because Mr. Kataria said that he made a representation before also and it is still not rectified. There is no point in raising that matter again. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Madam Deputy Chairman, as my colleague was pointing out, what the hon. Member has said is, to some extent correct. I would not say that all the trains are in a bad condition. In some areas, they are in a bad condition. We are making

efforts. If I may inform the House through you, Madam, the whole problem, the basic problem, is one of punctuality. We have a limited rolling stock. If the trains run on time, if punctuality is maintained, the rake is available for maintenance. There is primary maintenance and there is secondary maintenance. If the rake is available for both these maintenances at the originating place and at the terminating point, there will not be much of complaints. Whenever the punctuality goes bad, whenever there is no rake for running the trains, we get into problems. This is how most of the complaints do come. We are facing a serious problem in regard to rolling stock. We generally get the rolling stock from the I.R.F.C. From the time the share market had gone bad, the I.R.F.C. is not able to mobilise any resources. Railway money, I.R.F.C. money, is blocked even with the Canfina which has got into the scam. Therefore, we are facing an acute problem. However, irrespective of all these problems, Madam, we do appreciate the concern of the hon. Members. Our sincere efforts will be there to see that the standards are improved and the travelling public travel with more comfort.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The Minister has said that he has no resources, but he has agreed that there is need for improvement. I do not think there is need to ask any more questions on this because you will get the same answer. Now, Question No. 401-A. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Madam, I have one question. *(Interruptions)*

DR. MURLI MONOHAR JOSHI : My question would be this. If you say you have no resources, why do you continue with it ? There is no need to continue with it. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : If you ask a question, you will get the same answer. Why waste the time of the House ? There are other important questions. *(Interruptions)* Question No. 401-A. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA : If you say it is a general answer, we cannot ask questions of the Railway Ministry hereafterwards.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He should have a specific answer.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA : My supplementary is gone.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Most of the supplementaries are gone.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Madam, you should allow more Members. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Question No. 401-A. ....*(Interruptions)*...This was shifted from yesterday to today....*(Interruptions)*...Please. The Supplementary List must be with you. There is a separate list which was given, because this question was transferred from yesterday to today. Anyway, he will answer it. The answer is also there.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : Madam, before I answer this, with your permission may I say that this question was thrust upon me only yesterday ? I wish it had come earlier but, nevertheless, I am prepared to answer it.

Protection of Bamboo and Cane Plants

@401-A SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA :†
SHRI RANJAN PRASAD YADAV :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that bamboo and cane, the two plants are intimately associated with the life in the Eastern and North Eastern States and are a potential source of foreign exchange ;

(b) whether it is a fact that highly "vansalochan" a silica product of bamboo used in Ayurvedic and Unani medicines is also a foreign exchange earner;

(c) whether it is a fact that useful domestic furniture and artifacts are produced from these two plants which are liberally exported; and

(d) if so, what steps Government are taking to save these two valuable plants from extinction ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir. However, the potential of bamboo and cane

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@ Previously starred question No. 382, transferred from 24-8-93.

† The question was actually asked on the flower of the house by SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA.